

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, comprising:

receiving a request for a record;

5 communicating the request to one or more nodes, wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to provide an interface between one or more associated database units and a network, and wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to communicate with each other;

10 identifying one or more target database units that store the record;

accessing the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units;

15 processing the request based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units such that a response to the request is generated; and

returning the response to the request that is based on the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units.

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2. The method of Claim 1, wherein identifying comprises using a hashing algorithm to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

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3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising querying one or more of the nodes for data relating to an age characteristic associated with the record.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising providing an index in at least one of the nodes, the index comprising information associated with locations of one or more records, wherein one or more of the nodes may
5 access the index to identify one or more of the target database units that store the record.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein processing comprises performing an operation on the record that
10 facilitates generation of the response, each of the nodes being operable to perform the operation and the operation being selected from the group consisting of:

- a) modifying;
- b) deleting;
- 15 c) copying;
- d) printing; and
- e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising
20 communicating an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the target database units.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein identifying
25 comprises employing a central server to identify the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating the location of one or more records that are included within one or more of the database units.

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8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising
coupling one or more web servers to one or more of the
nodes, the web servers facilitating communications
between the network and one or more of the database
5 units.

9. Software embodied in a computer readable media for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, the software operable to:

receive a request for a record;

5 communicate the request to one or more nodes, wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to provide an interface between one or more associated database units and a network, and wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to communicate with each other;

10 identify one or more target database units that store the record;

access the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units;

15 process the request based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units such that a response to the request is generated; and

return the response to the request that is based on the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units.

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10. The software of Claim 9, further operable to use a hashing algorithm to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

25 11. The software of Claim 9, further operable to query one or more of the nodes for data relating to an age characteristic associated with the record.

12. The software of Claim 9, further operable to provide an index, the index comprising information associated with locations of one or more records, wherein one or more of the nodes may access the index to identify
5 one or more of the target database units that store the record.

13. The software of Claim 9, further operable to perform an operation on the record that facilitates
10 generation of the response, each of the nodes including software operable to perform the operation, the operation being selected from the group consisting of:

- a) modifying;
- b) deleting;
- 15 c) copying;
- d) printing; and
- e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

14. The software of Claim 13, further operable to
20 communicate an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the target database units.

15. The software of Claim 9, further operable to
25 employ a central server to identify the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating the location of one or more records that are included within one or more of the database units.

16. The software of Claim 9, further operable to couple one or more web servers to one or more of the nodes, the web servers facilitating communications between the network and one or more of the database
5 units.

17. A system for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, comprising:

means for receiving a request for a record;

means for communicating the request to one or more
5 nodes, wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to provide an interface between one or more associated database units and a network, and wherein one or more of the nodes is operable to communicate with each other;

means for identifying one or more target database
10 units that store the record;

means for accessing the record, which is stored in one or more of the target database units;

means for processing the request based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database
15 units such that a response to the request is generated; and

means for returning the response to the request that is based on the record that is stored in one or more of the target database units.

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18. The system of Claim 17, wherein the means for identifying comprises means for using a hashing algorithm to identify a location of the record within one or more of the target database units.

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19. The system of Claim 17, further comprising means for querying one or more of the nodes for data relating to an age characteristic associated with the record.

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20. The system of Claim 17, further comprising means for providing an index in at least one of the nodes, the index comprising information associated with locations of one or more records, wherein one or more of
5 the nodes may access the index to identify one or more of the target database units that store the record.

21. The system of Claim 17, wherein the means for processing comprises means for performing an operation on
10 the record that facilitates generation of the response, each of the nodes being operable to perform the operation, the operation being selected from the group consisting of:

- a) modifying;
- 15 b) deleting;
- c) copying;
- d) printing; and
- e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

22. The system of Claim 21, further comprising means for communicating an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the target database units.

23. The system of Claim 17, wherein the means for identifying comprises means for employing a central server to identify the target database units, the central server comprising information indicating the location of one or more records that are included within one or more
30 of the database units.

24. The system of Claim 17, further comprising
means for coupling one or more web servers to one or more
of the nodes, the web servers facilitating communications
between the network and one or more of the database
5 units.

25. An apparatus for processing a request using one or more database units coupled to a network, comprising:

one or more database units coupled to a network; and

one or more nodes, each of the nodes being coupled
5 to a respective database unit and operable to receive a
request for a record, one or more of the nodes also being
operable to provide an interface between one or more of
the database units and the network and to communicate
with each other to identify one or more target database
10 units that store the record, wherein the target database
units may be accessed by one or more of the nodes to
process the record that is stored in one of the target
database units such that a response to the request is
generated.

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26. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein one or more
of the nodes comprises a hashing algorithm operable to
identify a location of the record within one or more of
the target database units.

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27. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein one or more
of the nodes comprises an index operable to identify an
age characteristic associated with the record and to
identify a location of the record.

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28. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein one or more of the nodes are further operable to perform an operation on the record that facilitates generation of the response, and wherein the operation is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) modifying;
- b) deleting;
- c) copying;
- d) printing; and
- 10 e) structured query language (SQL) commands.

29. The apparatus of Claim 28, wherein one or more of the nodes are further operable to communicate an updated record after the operation is performed on the record to one or more of the database units.

30. The apparatus of Claim 25, further comprising a central server coupled to one or more of the nodes and operable to identify the target database units, wherein the central server comprises information indicating the location of one or more records included within one or more of the database units.

31. The apparatus of Claim 25, further comprising one or more web servers coupled to one or more of the nodes and operable to facilitate communications between the network and one or more of the database units.